

THE GREEN CALDRON

A Magazine of Freshman Writing



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I Fall With a Horse

HORACE HARDY

Rhetoric II, 1942-1943

AT THE APEX OF HIS CURVING FLIGHT, HIS FRONT LEGS struck the solidly-wired top bar with a sharp sound. I knew that he was turning over, as we had planned, which was fine; but I also knew that I was somehow off balance, which was not. The horse's head went down instantly as a result of the impact, and his hindquarters rose in a tight circle. I kicked loose from the stirrups frenziedly, but by then it was too late to vault off as I had planned. I slid over his right shoulder, pushing away from him, trying not to land under him as I was afraid I would. The ground tilted, came rushing diagonally at me; the horse was nearly all the way over now. I twisted, cat-like, tried to land on my feet, and as my face turned back towards the jump in the course of my somersault, I could see that Mal or someone had made a mistake in setting up the jump. Our big, green colt had splintered the top pole into two short, jagged-ended pieces. I remember wondering whether he had driven any splinters into his knees, and then, quite suddenly, I felt a terrible blow along the side of my head, a blow that pounded along my whole side and rasped and tore as I skidded along the ground. The horse came down immediately after, landing flat on his back with an impressive, hollow thud and a sudden, wheezy rush of air from his lungs. He was going to roll towards me—I could see it instantly; I realized the danger of it, but I couldn't twist away from him. He seemed to take an eternity in getting over, and as I watched, my legs flopping across each other as I tried to roll, I saw that the poles and the standards of the jump were ponderously toppling onto us. Across and through the flailing legs of the horse, I could see that Ted hadn't moved. He had been standing, braced almost, since I started the colt towards the jump. I suppose that things had happened too fast for him to comprehend. I wasn't quite sure of anything myself, except that I should have been getting out from under the colt's legs and wasn't doing so.

Well, it was too late to get away now. I threw my hands up over my face and started to curl into a ball. One of the colt's hoofs caught me on the temple and another drove into my stomach just below the heart. One of the standards crashed right behind my head, but the colt's body was much thicker than mine and had taken the shock of the poles, the first decent thing he had done for me that day. The broken halves of the poles, however, swung down, missed him, and, being wired to the standards, drove points first into the ground several inches from my face. The colt thrashed around, turned over onto his belly, and heaved himself to his feet, grunting prodigiously.

giously. Mal caught him by the dangling reins as the horse weaved unsteadily, trying to recover his breath.

Ted now came racing over, closely followed by two grooms. "Good God, Wayne!" he said excitedly. "Are you all right?"

"Yeah," I said. "He all right, Mal?"

Mal looked at the colt's knees. Outside of an ordinary welt there was no mark on them. "Sure," said Mal.

"The Hell you're all right," said Chuck.

I experimentally touched my face with one hand, wincing at the contact. My hand came away wet, sticky. I supposed that most of the skin had been scraped off. The other side of my face was a sheet of blood that came from a long cut the horse had opened with his hoof. I started to roll over and get up. A vicious, stabbing pain sliced through me. "I've wrenched my back," I said. "Probably my shoulder, too."

"Can you move it?" Ted asked.

I tried; I moved it, but I regretted it. "Oh, I don't think it's broken." I was breathing a little easier now. That kick below the heart had knocked the wind out of me, but it was coming back by degrees.

"I'll help you up," said Chuck, and he grabbed me under the arms and lifted. I tried to put some weight on my left leg, but that was a mistake. I cried out.

"Put him down!" yelled Ted. "Wayne . . ."

I lay, breathing heavily, tensing all the muscles in my body against the pain of my leg. "What?" I said at last.

"What hurts?"

"Leg. Around the knee. I think I dislocated it."

"I'll get a doctor," said Chuck, and he set off towards the house at a dead run.

"Bright boy," said Mal.

"We'll have to get another pole from somewhere."

"Don't worry about that, Wayne. Just be still."

I propped myself up on my good arm. There was a good deal of blood around on the ground, presumably mine. I wondered very dully about it. There was a lot of blood and dirt on my face and hands and coat, too. All a mess. Funny that nothing hurt very much, just throbbed. I supposed that inside I was aching, screaming, but didn't realize it. Maybe that kick on the temple had dulled everything. That was the only thing that really hurt, though, unless I aggravated my back by moving, but that kick worried and pounded and tore at me until I dug my fingernails into the palms of my hands.

Ted kept saying, "Lie still, Wayne. Lie still," over and over again. I wished that he'd stop, but he just kept repeating the phrase.

"Listen, Wayne," Mal said. "Maybe if we each support an arm, we can sort of carry you to the house."

"You morons leave me alone," I said. "Lord, but my head hurts."

"You don't look so good," Ted volunteered.

"Bring the colt over here," I said. Mal led the black animal to me. "Good looking devil."

"That ought to cure him," said Mal.

"Ought to," I said. "I'll bet I'm a bloody mess."

"I think you'll live," said Mal.

"I got off-balance up there. First time it ever happened."

"Damn near the last, too," said Ted.

"Listen," I said, sitting up with one leg tucked under me. "I'm sick of sitting out here on the cold ground." Ted set up a loud howling for Chuck, who came running back, and while Mal took the colt back to the barns, Ted and Chuck hoisted me up and we started back to the house. I kept thinking: how did I get into this mess anyway? If I'd only had my balance up there . . . even for a moment . . . but things just break that way, especially in the horse game, and we become reconciled to it.

"It's a dirty shame," Ted muttered.

"Yeah," I said. "Hey! Easy on that leg, Chuck!"

The Wages of Sin

DORIS LANTZ

Rhetoric II, Theme 5, 1942-1943

"MURDER AT THE SHEEPSHED!"

The headlines of the small-town newspaper blared the words that were on everyone's lips. The story made excellent gossip for a few days. The Sheepshed was a notorious roadhouse outside the city limits which frequently furnished juicy bits of scandal for gossips to roll on their tongues. This time the scandal was a little more diverting than usual, for it involved an actual murder rather than the usual knifing or shooting. When the facts were learned, the incident wasn't so interesting after all. "Just a drunk . . . no aim in life . . . no good to anyone . . . quarreled with the bartender over some change . . . someone threw a beer bottle . . . someone else yelled some dirty names . . . bartender took a gun out and shot him . . . too bad his wife and little kids were right there when it happened . . . but his kind always gets it in the end . . . just a loafer and as well off dead. . . ."

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It was a Monday afternoon in mid-August. It was hot. The air was heavy with dust and the pollen of flowers. Corn leaves curled in the fields and tar oozed from the black-top road. Dust-laden cars were huddled about the small country church. My sister and I entered and took seats near the back. Half the benches were already occupied. Flower-girls hurried up and down the narrow aisle, bearing wilting gladioli, roses, and dahlias. As the church filled, the heat became more oppressive, and the stench of unclean, sweating bodies became more unbearable. A garishly dressed woman entered with an unkempt man and they sat down directly in front of me. The foul odor of whiskey, onions, and chewing-gum assailed my nostrils every time one of them spoke.

The mourners entered, two-by-two. A mass of greasy obesity on my right pointed certain ones out to me: "That there girl in the black hat is his wife. She sure looks worn out, and Wilma was a right purty little girl when they got married. 'Course she couldn't 'spect to get no better than him, already havin' that one kid. . . . That's his mom. Feel mighty sorry for her—she tried to do right by 'er kids. . . . Danny, there, was with Cecil on the night. For brothers they didn't fight so much—'ceptin' when one of 'em was purty full of likker . . . and there's Joe and Leroy. That yellow car out there belongs to them. They went to Chicago and come back rich. . . ."

This last bit of information I already had. I had heard those murmurings about Joe and Leroy and Chicago. Boys with their bad blood *would* have a natural talent for night-clubbing and gambling. A half-scream, half-sob interrupted my reverie. "Oh, God!" The voice died to a low, continuous moan. . . . The whole room grew quiet when the long, dark box was wheeled slowly to the front. The broken-down organ squeaked and four voices waveringly combined in song. "Rock of ages, cleft for me. . . ."

The Reverend McDonald surveyed the motley congregation. He was a fire-and-brimstone preacher, and the temptation to use the dead man as an example of the "ravages of strong-drink" still persisted when he began speaking. But it was his duty to comfort these people. Upturned faces stared gravely at him. They didn't know what he was saying, but his voice sounded consoling. The drone had the steady accompaniment of a weeping woman and a child with whooping cough.

My clothes became damp and sticky. My dress stuck to the back of the wooden seat. The foul odor of the place was nauseating. Finally the people in the front rows rose and marched past the now-opened casket. One glimpse of the sunken, degenerated face of the corpse was enough for me. I rushed outside, welcoming the thick, dusty air with relish. I still retain the vivid impression that afternoon made on me. I have relived it again and again in nightmares. I found the "story back of the headlines" that I was looking for, and I'll never forget it.

I, The Tower of London

MARY ALICE LAMBERT

Rhetoric II, Theme 9, 1942-1943

GRIM, SILENT, FOREBODING, I STAND ON THE NORTH bank of the Thames with all of London stretched at my feet. I, the ghostly remnant of a dead age, still exist although the people who once suffered, murdered, wept, and repented within my walls are dead. Lustful Henry VIII, learned Francis Bacon, gallant Raleigh, lovely Katherine Howard, "bloody" Mary, turbulent Elizabeth, all are dust and mold today. I, the Tower of London, have seen eight hundred and twenty-four years of English history pass through my gates. Countless numbers of prisoners have written their names in tears and blood upon my walls, but there are three whom I shall always remember. These three, Anne Boleyn, Lady Jane Grey, and the Earl of Essex, encountered the wrath of the Tudors and paid—with their heads.

It was raining on that second day of May in 1536 when Anne Boleyn was brought to Traitors' Gate. Although I had heard rumors of Henry's latest love, Jane Seymour, I was horrified and astounded. Could this wretched woman be Anne Boleyn, Queen of England? How different she was from the lovely girl who had ridden forth from my gates to her coronation. On that day she had been as radiant as the silver tissue of her gown, as glowing as the rich rubies which encircled her dark hair. Now she flung herself down upon a stone and wept, the rain mingling with her tears. Only after much persuasion, did Anne allow the guard to lead her to the palace apartments which had been prepared for her. Ironically, these were the same apartments from which she had gone to her coronation.¹

The next day London hummed with the story. Anne Boleyn had been arrested on charges of adultery. Down in the depths of my dungeons, Mark Sneaton, tortured upon the rack, admitted that he and the queen were guilty. He had hoped that he would be spared if he confessed, but he was killed so that he might not retract his statement. Anne Boleyn was immediately brought to trial; and although there was no real evidence against her, she was sentenced to be beheaded.

During the long days of waiting, Anne seemed almost mad at times. I remember one incident very well. Anne asked the lieutenant of the Tower why the execution did not take place sooner so that the pain would be over. When he told her that the pain could not be much, since it was so sudden,

¹Bell, Doyne C., *Notices of the Historic Persons Buried in the Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula in the Tower of London* (London, 1877), p. 95.

she began to laugh heartily, and replied, "I hear the executioner is very good, and I have a little neck."²

Anne Boleyn was executed on the nineteenth of May. I remember well how she looked that morning. She wore a black damask dress, a large white cape, and a black velvet hood; not even at her coronation had she looked lovelier. I cannot remember all that she said, but one sentence has remained in my memory. With tears in her eyes she cried, "I have come here to die; not to accuse my enemies."³ After she had removed her hood and collar, she lay down at the block. As the drums began to roll, I heard her whisper, "O, Lord, have pity on my soul."⁴ At noon the ax fell. Anne's fair head rolled in the dust. All that remained of this girl, who had risen from humble station to become Queen of England, was placed in an old arrow case and buried in the Chapel of St. Paul ad Vincula.

That night Anne's motherless child, disowned by her father, wept alone. She was forgotten then, but not for long. That child was later called Elizabeth of England!

On the tenth of July, 1553, Lady Jane Grey, the cousin of Edward VI, was proclaimed Queen of England. She was only sixteen years old at that time; and although she did not wish to become a queen, she could not disobey the wishes of her father and her husband. Mary, the daughter of Henry VIII and his first wife, was determined, however, to claim the throne; and she allowed Jane to rule only nine days.

Jane was immediately tried and condemned to death on charges of high treason; but, for nearly a year, she was a prisoner within my walls because Mary had an insane desire to convert her to Catholicism.⁵ During the long days of her imprisonment, I never heard Jane utter one word that was not gentle and uncomplaining. Her faith in God was glorious. Even when she was most tormented by Mary's attempts to convert her, Jane clung to her Protestant faith without wavering.

On the twelfth of May, 1554, Jane went forth to die. The morning was gray and misty; heavy clouds veiled the sun. Slowly the procession wended its way to my courtyard. At the steps of the scaffold, Jane quietly turned and addressed those who had come to see her die. Her lovely face was serene and happy as she said her last prayers and made her farewells. After she finished speaking, she removed her outer gown and headdress. The blindfold was placed over her eyes, and she was led to the block. Jane laid her young head upon the block and cried aloud for all to hear, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."⁶ "A stroke of the ax, a thud, a crimson

²Hackett, Francis, *Queen Anne Boleyn* (New York, 1939), pp. 474-475.

³Bartlett, David W., *The Life of Lady Jane Grey* (New York, 1854), p. 53.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁵Davey, Richard, *The Nine Days' Queen* (London, 1910), p. 329.

⁶Bartlett, *The Life of Lady Jane Grey*, p. 289.

deluge on the straw strewn scaffold, and as the cannon boomed, Lady Jane Grey was no more."⁷

Robert Devereaux, Earl of Essex, was the last of these three to enter my walls through Traitors' Gate. I have always remembered him, for he was, without a doubt, one of the most colorful figures in history.

Essex had been a great favorite of Queen Elizabeth, but like many others he made a fatal mistake. He misjudged Elizabeth's fierce nature and tried to dominate her. This error could lead but to one end—the block! To regain the power he had lost, Essex plotted a rebellion, which ended in failure. On February 19, 1601, he was brought to trial and found guilty of treason. The verdict was death! Essex was then brought back to me to await his execution.

On the twenty-fifth of the same month, Essex went into my courtyard to die. He was a magnificent figure in a gown of black velvet, a black satin suit, and a little black hat. The ceremony was long and tedious; according to custom, Essex spoke eloquently of his sins and prayed for pardon. After he had asked God to forgive his enemies, he removed his cloak and knelt down at the block. "The ax flashed through the air; there was no movement; but twice the violent action was repeated before the head was severed."⁸ The headsman stooped, picked up the head; and holding it high in the air, he exclaimed, "God save the Queen!"⁹

Through these stories of their victims, I hope that I may point out to you certain facts concerning the characters of the three Tudors, Henry VIII and his two daughters, Mary and Elizabeth. They, not their victims, made the really great impression upon history. During the era in which they reigned, England began to emerge from her cocoon and develop into one of the greatest nations in the world.

Henry VIII was probably one of the most self-centered men of all time. When he succeeded his father, Henry VII, at the age of eighteen, Henry was handsome, generous, and gay; and as a result, he was pampered by the royal family and by his subjects. His father had already increased the royal power notably; and when young Henry began to rule, he was in a position to dictate to Parliament. Henry became accustomed to having whatever he wanted, and it seemed logical to him that Anne Boleyn should die if she stood in the way of his marriage to Jane Seymour. He also thought that he should have a new wife since Anne had failed to give him a male heir. No one can deny that Henry VIII possessed dynamic force. Only a man like him would have dared make such a drastic change in the English Church.

Mary Tudor is, I believe, one of the most pitiful women in history. Of all the people who have passed through my gates she is the saddest. She was declared illegitimate and disowned by her father so that he could marry

⁷Davey, *The Nine Days' Queen*, p. 344.

⁸Strachey, Lytton, *Elizabeth and Essex* (New York, 1928), p. 268.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 268.

Anne Boleyn. This alone was enough to warp any child's character; but poor Mary was also separated from her mother, Catherine of Aragon, whom she adored. She saw her mother humiliated and hurt. Proud Mary was compelled to live at the court as a royal stepchild. She was forced to wait for marriage; and when she did marry Philip of France, she discovered that he despised her although she loved him. Her religion became a passion that gripped her soul. To satisfy her bitter desire for revenge, she often used religious motives to kill innocent persons. Catholicism was to her the only true faith. If Mary had possessed a woman's heart, she would never have executed Lady Jane Grey, but Mary had long ceased to be a woman.¹⁰

Queen Elizabeth was a magnificent figure. She loved to play with life and was delighted with its drama. "On the whole, she was English. On the whole, though she was infinitely subtle, she was not cruel; she was almost humane for her times; and her occasional bursts of savagery were the results of fear or temper."¹¹ By killing Essex, Elizabeth felt that she had proved her triumph over men, and that she had avenged her mother, who had died because of a man's whim. She had the energy of a man, combined with a woman's evasiveness.¹² Elizabeth was shrewd and calculating. She had to have those qualities to hold her throne in those times of plots and counterplots. History shall never know another woman like her.

Bombs fall in London now. They shake my very foundations and crash about me, but I shall defy them all. Tradition is not a thing of stone and sticks, but an intangible thing held within the hearts of a people. Let the bombs come. I shall survive as long as a May queen is crowned on Tower Hill, as long as England lives.

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¹⁰Bartlett, *The Life of Lady Jane Grey*, p. 252.

¹¹Strachey, *Elizabeth and Essex*, p. 16.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 13.

Mikhail Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows the Don*

MARIAN COHEN

Rhetoric I, Theme 14, 1942-1943

AND *QUIET FLOWS THE DON* SMACKS AS THOROUGHLY of Russia as do borscht and vodka, Tschaikowsky, and Tolstoy. It is not merely a novel; it is a kaleidoscope in which we see a variegated, swiftly changing pattern of life—the life of the Don Cossacks under the last Czar of Russia, during the World War, and in the throes of revolution and civil war.

In young Gregor Melekhov with his "hanging hook nose, bluish almonds of burning irises in slightly oblique slits, brown, muddy skin drawn over angular cheekbones," Sholokhov embodies the youthful Cossack spirit of fierce gaiety, reckless abandon, lust and carnality, and deep-rooted, traditional loyalty to the Czar. At the same time, Sholokhov makes his character the personification of the revolutionary trend—a rebellious spirit that questions the existing system, ruthlessly fights and kills. In Ivan Alexievich, the illiterate, exploited mill-worker, runs the undercurrent of restlessness and resentment of oppression and poverty that seethed in all of the Russian laborers. In Stackman, the keen, analytically minded, quiet Bolshevik, is the spirit that eventually leads the workers into a bloody overthrow of the Czar and into the resultant civil war, when they become convinced of the wisdom of his words, "Your heads will ache for the drunken orgies of others." In Pantaleimon Prokoffievich is the reactionary element—the element that is determined to maintain the status quo with fierce resolve: to hold on to the little it has, to let the wealthy landowners continue to accumulate wealth at the expense of the peasant, to let imperialism and capitalism follow their natural bent. Anna, the lovely, young Jewess, says, "—how poisonous and petty seems any care for achievement of one's own individual little happiness at the present time"; and as she fearlessly faces death as a machine gunner in the Red Guard she embodies the Soviet's passionate devotion to communism, nationalism, and self-sacrifice. Bunchuk, Anna's lover; Podtielkov, the Chairman of the Don Revolutionary Committee; and a host of others, are the Russians from every walk of society who give their lives that others might live in equality, confident that the cause they fight and die for will ultimately triumph. Sholokhov's vivid, pulsating characters share in common a subordination to something bigger than themselves; a something that seems relentlessly to sweep each one onward to a preordained fate.

Sholokhov's stark picturizations—at once exquisite and terrible—capture

every mood and thought with lyrical artistry. Always he makes felt his ardent love of Russia and his deep appreciation of nature's beauty. He personifies natural objects—"The moon rose slowly and one-sidedly, like an invalid going upstairs." His metaphors are full and graphic—"Out of the black heaven the yellow-green, unripe cherries of stars stared down at him." By means of similes between personality traits and nature Sholokhov advances his character development—"His heart had grown hard, dry like a salt-marsh in draught; as a marsh will not absorb water, so Gregor's heart would not absorb compassion"—and in a similar manner brings to life almost intangible moods and feelings—"In the armies a ripened anger flowed and bubbled like water in a spring."

Since Soviet Russia's attitude toward religion arouses varied sentiments of approval and disapproval, it is interesting to analyze religious sentiment in *And Quiet Flows the Don*. During the periods of peace and comparative security, as well as during the war and the revolution, the peasant holds fast to God, while the intellectual wavers between atheism and wearied agnosticism. The key to Sholokhov's bitterness and skepticism is found in this quotation, "But death came upon all alike, upon those who wrote down the prayers also. Their bodies rotted on the fields of Galicia and East Prussia, in the Carpathians and Rumania, whenever the ruddy flames of war flickered and the tracks of Cossack horses were imprinted in the earth." Perhaps this explains contemporary Russia's lack of religious faith. The Soviet's cold, dispassionate reason must reject a God who can inflict such suffering and horror.

Similarly skeptical is Misha Kasheuai's opinion, "I don't think there is anything more terrible in the world than human beings." Not only Red Russians, but also White Russians, not only atheists, but also supposedly good Christians perpetrate bestial, bloodthirsty crimes against one another. Sholokhov does not justify either faction, but subtly illustrates the basic worth and altruism of the Bolshevik cause. I was repelled by acts of terror, but agreed with the principles inspiring those acts.

Sholokhov does not tie up the loose threads of the story that he has woven as a background to the political movements, thereby increasing the feeling that some greater power than individual patterns was manifesting itself in Russia. In fact, as the book ends, Valet, a revolutionist, is shot in the back, dying without knowing the outcome of the Civil War; yet one knows that the Bolsheviks *will* sweep on to victory. Valet is buried.

Later, two bustards fight about the shallow mound of his grave for the female, for "the right to life, for love and fertility. And again after a little while a female bustard laid nine speckled, smoky-blue eggs and sat on them, warming them with her body, protecting them with her glassy wings." And so Sholokhov expresses the simple and beautiful thought that one dies and another is born, that despair perishes, but hope lives on.

Nostalgia

JOHN BROPHY

Rhetoric II, Theme 10, 1942-1943

WAY DOWN IN THE STATE OF REASONING IN THE heart of the Argumentation Mountains lies a little valley known as Fallacy Valley. There where a creek runs uphill, birds never sing, and it snows in the middle of July, lived a little family called the Syllogisms. There were three members of the family—Major Premise, a Southern colonel who had been demoted; Minor Premise, who was not yet twenty-one; and little Conclusion, whom you shall have to draw for yourself.

The Syllogism family was a very remarkable one, for it seems that whatever they said was right, no matter how absurd their statement.

For instance, one day the Major came dashing into the house shouting at the top of his lungs, "All things with feathers can fly!"

Minor Premise, who had been quietly stuffing a pillow with feathers, looked up and calmly replied, "This pillow has feathers."

At this time little Conclusion, who had been awakened from his afternoon nap by the noise, yawned, stretched, and said in a sleepy voice, "Therefore, that pillow can fly."

And sure enough, the pillow flapped quickly out of the window and soared up and up among the mountains and disappeared from sight.

A few weeks after this astounding incident, the entire family became hoarse and seemed to be losing their voices, and so they went to see the doctor. The doctor, who lived high in the mountains, and whose name was Dr. Rhet, examined his patients carefully and made his diagnosis.

"You have a bad case of mendacity," he told them. "You must leave Fallacy Valley and move over to the other valley." As he spoke, he pointed out the window at another valley on the opposite side of the mountain. On a large sign in the valley was printed: "Welcome to the Valley of Logic."

To the amazement of the Syllogism family, the creeks flowed downhill, the birds sang, and it snowed in January.

Following the doctor's advice, the Syllogisms went home, packed their belongings, and trudged over the mountain into the Valley of Logic. After they got used to their new home, they liked it quite as well as their old home, even though it was very different.

One afternoon the Syllogisms were taking a walk. Suddenly Major Premise remembered something, and he stopped, looking very much astonished.

"Things must have wings in order to fly," he mumbled dazedly.

Minor, looking even more astonished, added, "Pillows don't have wings!"

Little Conclusion, who was even more thunderstruck than either Major or Minor, blurted out, "Therefore a pillow can't fly."

All of a sudden there was a great whirring sound, and a pillow fell from high in the air and landed right at their feet. As you can see, the Syllogisms were being logical as well as consistent.

At times the Syllogisms become homesick and go back to Fallacy Valley for a while, and so, children, if you listen to enough arguments, you sometimes discover our little family stealing from the Valley of Logic back into their old haunts in Fallacy Valley.

The Noble Manner

NELSON GURNEE

General Division I, Theme 12, 1942-1943

CAREFUL ACCOUNTS OF THE FRENCH AND RUSSIAN revolutions, or of similar events which brought about the execution of members of a ruling class, have always intrigued me. The attraction is not a sanguinary one; I am merely interested in the way in which those people behaved shortly before they died. Particularly, I am interested in those who displayed the noble manner.

The term might best be explained by citing an example of the noble manner as displayed by one of the Russian ruling class. Vassily Kurishenkow was a Tsarist officer, captured by the Revolutionists and condemned to death. In keeping with tradition, his captors granted him a final request. He elected to choose, to inspect, and, finally, to command his own firing squad. The soldiers he chose had all been members of his regiment. Pausing in front of each man, the colonel commented acidly on the soldier's appearance and finished with the reminder that such poor appearance was never tolerated in the army of the Tsar. The executioners were dumbfounded, and when he stood before them and ordered them to aim and fire, they were paralyzed. Again, the command. Again, the squad remained inert. The colonel shouted invectives at the frightened riflemen. He reminded them, in bitter tones, that he was no upstart Red officer—he was a Tsarist colonel, and he was to be obeyed! For the third time he commanded. Ragged shots answered him, and he fell to the ground, dead.

What did he gain by such dramatics? Probably everything that was important in his theory of life. As a boy, he had been taught to think that he was superior to the men he would one day command. He knew that he had been created to rule; the peasant to obey. Any departure from that

theory, however slight, was heresy. The thoughts that ran through his mind on the eve of his execution must have been disturbing. He, a noble, was to be shot by men who, a month before, would not have dared to speak to him. His whole conception of the social and political order was crumbling, and with it, his class pride. In one stroke, he would salvage everything! He would command his own firing squad. He would give the order to fire. Not once, in that courtyard, would he allow them to think they were any more than cattle, any more than dirt. When they fired, they would destroy not a mere man, but a creature infinitely superior to themselves. He exhibited the noble manner.

It is, first of all, a state of mind, peculiar to those trained to command others. Few common men have faced death with the aplomb and dignity of certain members of the French nobility. The Marquis de Coeurbriand requested to stand first in line for the guillotine, because, "I don't intend to stand in this infernal heat all day." Was it only an empty, futile gesture? Not at all! Whatever his tormenters might do to him—mock him, beat him, behead him—he would not allow them to shake his intense belief in his divine right to rule. He was born a noble; he would die a noble. His only outward emotion was one of complete boredom.

The noble manner, although sometimes present in lesser people, is nearly always inherent in those of royal blood. Though it may not show itself until the last minute, it somehow appears and enables its possessor to die with the dignity befitting his station. There is no better example of this latent quality than that of Marie Antoinette, Queen of France. Daughter of the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, Antoinette was married to the dull Dauphin of France. In time, he became king, and she, his frivolous, immature queen. Life was never real to 'Toinette; she lived in a gay, continuous dream, quite apart from the harsh realities of eighteenth century France. When the inevitable revolution shattered that dream and then dragged her off to prison, the greatest fear that beset her childish mind was that an impending garden-party would be spoiled. But as her time grew shorter, and she saw the end of her kind and her world, she found the courage and noble manner that had been hers since her birth as a daughter of the empress of a vast and powerful land. The crowd that witnessed her execution was totally unprepared for what it saw. Instead of a screaming, unnerved queen, they saw a dignified, gray-haired woman go to her death. The woman who climbed the guillotine stairs was every inch a Hapsburg princess. History has preserved a fragment of a letter, written by a woman who saw the execution, describing the event to her husband: "The Queen was fourth to reach the knife. An ornament fell from her dress and was returned to her by the executioner. The Queen thanked him in a quiet voice—the only words she spoke. But before she laid herself on the board, she looked out at the mob, and without moving her lips or uttering a sound, she called us scum."

Important Achievements of Simon Bolivar

JAMES RINGGER

Rhetoric II, Theme 9, 1942-1943

IN THESE TIMES WHEN LATIN AMERICA IS PLAYING AN increasingly vital part in our lives and in our thinking, it behooves us to learn more about the almost legendary figure that led South America to its independence—Simon Bolivar,* whose life is a saga of courage and cleverness.

All students of South American history agree that one thing—the military genius of Bolivar—brought about the liberation of Latin America from the tyranny of Spanish rule. Bolivar's achievements in the lengthy Wars of Liberation have ranked him among the greatest military strategists of all time, for with a tiny, ill-trained, ill-equipped army he defeated some of the world's finest soldiers, and completely freed Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.

Much of the success of Bolivar was due to the seemingly mad risks he took on the fields of battle. So great and superior were the forces facing him, and so able were their commanders, that it was often only by using audacious tactics that he could gain victory. Many a desperate situation resulted in ultimate triumph because some daring sortie succeeded. At the bridge of Boyaca,¹ faced by Barreiro, one of Spain's ablest and most gallant generals, Bolivar, finding himself at a serious disadvantage, suddenly ordered his best infantry to charge a hill on which his opponent was entrenched. In the face of a withering Spanish fire this seemed sheer suicide, yet Simon's inspired patriots seized the hill and crushed their foes. Again, at the Battle of Carabobo, one of the most decisive in the war, Bolivar sent the pick of his Llaneros (Venezuelan cowboys) and the British Legion of volunteers to take a narrow pass—considered impregnable—which guarded the Spanish rear.² The cool, deadly valor of the British and the fiery, brilliant courage of the Llaneros broke the back of the enemy resistance, though at a frightful cost, and the great battle was won.

No one ever doubted the personal valor of Bolivar. Whenever the fight was crucial, whenever his men were faltering, Simon leaped to the van and "led the charges himself, changing saber from right hand to left."³ At the

*Pronounced—See-MOHN Bo-LEE-var.

¹Ybarra, T. R., *Bolivar, the Passionate Warrior*, (New York, 1929), p. 203.

²*Ibid.*, p. 224-5.

³Waugh, Elizabeth, *Simon Bolivar*, (New York, 1941), p. 132.

Battle of Carabobo, after the aforementioned Llaneros and British had broken the enemy, Bolivar himself led the final, ferocious onslaught. His indomitable spirit in the face of defeat was ever a source of wonder to many of his officers who were willing to lay down arms at the first sign of disaster. Twice he was driven from the continent, once in utter defeat at the hands of the butcher Boves. Many times petty jealousies and insubordinations among his officers forced him to pass up an inviting chance or to lose a vital battle. Nevertheless, Simon Bolivar kept his goal—the liberation of South America—constantly before him, and where a lesser man would have given up in disgust, continued fighting to ultimate triumph.

Probably the key to the Liberator's success, however, was his wily planning. He was never without a strong plan of action; much of his strategy he invented on the spur of the moment. At San Jose de Cucuta Bolivar sent a small force to assault a strongly fortified town which he wanted. When this force was repulsed and retreated in apparent disorder, the Spaniards poured out of their stronghold to complete the victory. Bolivar, waiting with his main army in a nearby wood, swept down on the unsuspecting enemy, annihilated them, and seized the town.⁴ The Battle of Taguanes gives an even more striking example of his cunning. There the Spanish were retiring in good order towards a ridge on which they would be unassailable. Seeing that they must not be allowed to gain the crest, Simon ordered each cavalryman to take on behind him on his horse a heavily armed infantryman and then to dash across the valley and seize the ridge. Faking a mere cavalry sortie, the patriot force reached the hill, dismounted, and opened fire on the unsuspecting Spanish, who, pinned between two armies, were soon beaten.⁵ Another time Bolivar sent an Indian with supposedly valuable dispatches under orders to let himself be captured by the Spanish, who held an impregnable pass. The enemy general, reading that a rebel force was about to assail his rear, fled in haste, and Bolivar gained passage.⁶

Another characteristic which Simon exhibited enabled him to exercise undisputed control over his soldiery and to command their respect. He was one of those rare "born leaders." Perhaps the classic example of this ability for leading was his unbelievable trek over the highest Andes with his army. Such a trip is still deemed a miracle by present-day historians who retraced Bolivar's steps, for even today there are only goat-ledges over the icy, forbidding Andes. It was in this march that Bolivar demonstrated the power of mind over body. His army was composed of lowlanders who were accustomed to the torrid heat of the coastal plains. Food was scarce and adequate clothing did not exist. Despite these seemingly insurmountable

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁵Vaucaire, Michel, *Bolivar, the Liberator*, (New York, 1929), p. 83.

⁶Waugh, Elizabeth, *Simon Bolivar*, p. 94.

obstacles, Bolivar successfully crossed the Andes, and a few days later won a mighty battle. During this nightmarish expedition the Liberator "was everywhere, tugging at some mule that would go no farther, helping to reload some animal whose burden had slipped. . . . He made jokes about their plight, and at night around the campfire sang gay, French songs to his exhausted men."⁷ "Carrying the injured, he made innumerable crossings of the torrential mountain streams."⁸

Bolivar had another attribute of the real leader: he could mingle with his men and yet retain his dignity and superiority. It was this trait that endeared him to the aristocracy-hating patriots and enabled him to hold their complete confidence. Waugh says, "Bolivar in the field waged almost constant guerrilla warfare, lived the wild Llanero life; he seldom changed his ragged clothes, slept on the ground, was often hungry." Ybarra adds, "He acted as though there were no social or military gulf between him and his coarse, tattered Llaneros. He ate their food, joked with them, and knew all the celebrities among them. His flashing eyes and thundering voice were respected by all."

The Liberator's soldiers never lacked inspiration, for their spirits were always kept at the peak, whether by personal valor or by flaming oratory. Whenever a decisive battle was in the offing, Bolivar assembled his rebels and gave a fiery speech. Once during a battle, when a group of patriot recruits who had previously asked for a name for their battalion broke and fled before the Spanish, Simon went to them, "Soldiers of the 'nameless battalion,' if you wish weapons and flags, go and find them." Immediately these recruits, armed only with clubs, fell ferociously on a Spanish unit and utterly destroyed it, saving the day.⁹ Later, when Bolivar needed the capture of Spanish ships controlling a river, he made a stirring speech. It so aroused the Llanero chieftain, Paez, that he led fifty cavalrymen into the river, swam to the ships, and boarded and took them.

As if liberating South America were not enough in itself, Simon Bolivar actually CREATED it. Had he not also been a gifted statesman, all that was gained through his exertions would have been lost, and the Latin American states probably never would have evolved a stable form of government. Fortunately, though, he was able to see clearly South America's governmental needs, and he acted accordingly.

As are so many Latins, Bolivar was a wonderful orator, and he used this gift both as a warrior and a statesman. Often when he proposed some of his fantastic plans his officers refused to accept them. But soon the magic tongue of Bolivar had disposed of all objections and had the officers acclaiming his brilliant strategy. In civilian circles Simon invariably met oppo-

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁸Ybarra, T. R., *Bolivar, the Passionate Warrior*, p. 236.

⁹Vaucaire, Michel, *Bolivar, the Liberator*, p. 116.

sition when he proposed his then radical governmental theories, yet always it was his theories that were finally accepted. He used this gift almost daily to keep his men peaceful and satisfied. "Bolivar had to act with finesse, to flatter the presuming and promise a great deal in order to get a moderate amount of help. The most important part of the war was to make the different nationalities realize that they were all part of the same country, and that they must devote themselves to the cause of liberty."¹⁰ These things he did successfully.

Bolivar was the author of some of the world's greatest political documents; for his ability to write probably exceeded even his ability to speak. While in England as ambassador of the First Venezuelan Republic he wrote many editorials which brought support and sympathy to his nation. "The Morning Chronicle and the Edinburgh Review published impassioned articles, appeals to George III, and magnificent plans for an American confederation. When he left, 200 people accompanied him to the pier."¹¹ Among the great papers Bolivar wrote are the Constitution of Angostura, the Manifesto of Cartagena, and the Jamaica Letter. Each of these documents added supporters to the rebel cause and strengthened the determination of those already fighting for it.

Even to the present day the constitutions of South American republics reflect the ingenuity of Simon in governmental matters. He realized as did no others of the time that the Latins must have a carefully restricted form of government . . . democratic, to be sure, but nevertheless restricted. He said, "pure democracy can not be introduced into backward, chaotic Venezuela, where the population, treated by the Spanish for generations as little better than slaves, are pathetically remote from political enlightenment."¹² Although he recognized the advantages of the United States' form of government, Bolivar knew that it would not work in South America. To preserve any semblance of cohesion, the government must be strongly centralized. The correctness of Bolivar's beliefs is borne out by modern South American governing; all the South American countries possess a powerful central government, and nearly all follow his pattern exclusively. Bolivar himself drafted the constitutions of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Bolivia; and Peru imitated these. The charters of these nations contain such of Bolivar's ideas as complete civil freedom and the maintenance of an hereditary upper house which acts as a stabilizing body.

As a gift of lasting importance Bolivar left to the Americas his plan for an American confederation. Few know that he, not a United States' "Dollar Diplomat," originated it. Bolivar saw early that, despite his warnings, South

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹²Lemly, H. R., *Bolivar, Liberator of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia* (Boston, 1923), p. 179.

American countries were going to split up into many small, weak nations, and, to quote Waugh, "he desired to see all the republics of America united in one council chamber, presenting a united front for defense, to provide mutual assistance, not only against foreign aggressors, but also against the decaying political beliefs of the Old World. He dreamed of a great and permanent Congress which would meet at Panama to treat and discuss in the high interests of peace and war with the nations of the three other parts of the world."¹³ In fact, through Bolivar's efforts, a Pan-American Assembly was called at Panama, but reverses in the war forced its early adjournment.

In the future this Pan-American union will, I hope, be taken at its true worth: the first attempt at an inter-nation confederation. Today's well-known Pan American Union is a direct outgrowth of Bolivar's dreams, and even now that organization plays a vital role in Western Hemisphere and world affairs. This was Simon Bolivar's parting gift to posterity.

Afterword: Having read this, one may feel that I am an ardent "Bolivarist," a hero-worshipper. Probably the manner in which this theme is written will leave that impression. In answer to this expected criticism I can only point to the title of my theme: Important Achievements of Simon Bolivar. This is no analysis of the Liberator's character, but a recounting of his great traits and deeds. Admittedly Bolivar was not perfect; his excessive vanity, his stubbornness, his notorious love for beautiful ladies all show this. Nevertheless, he had a profound influence on the world, and so is worthy of study.

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¹³Waugh, Elizabeth, *Simon Bolivar*, p. 132.

Home for the Week-end

RUTH HUTTER

Rhetoric II, Theme 12, 1942-1943

HOME—THE PEACEFUL REFUGE FOR MY OVERWORKED being, where Pop dashes around, endeavoring to change a five-dollar bill for his business; where Mom bustles around the kitchen, trying to serve meals on time; where four-year-old niece, Tiny, scurries through the rooms, knocking over vases, pulling doilies from table tops, and emptying the contents of the cupboards on the floor; where sisters Irene, Helen, and Betty congregate in a bedroom, discussing bridge clubs, babies, and Red Cross work; where brothers-in-law Howard, Al, and Max gather in the living room, arguing about the shortcomings of the war, the administration, and the football games. I love it! When I, Susy, the Co-ed daughter, come home for the week-end, though, Pop's business, Mom's cooking, Tiny's pranks, sisters' discussions, and the arguments of my brothers-in-law become secondary. I am the central attraction: the actress in the spotlight, the organism under the microscope. If Franklin D. visited our house, he wouldn't be more royally treated than I.

One of my hobbies is eating. Realizing that food is expensive, scarce, and none too delicious at college, Mom replenishes the supply when Susy comes home. Instead of the usual roll and coffee (not really coffee, but a somewhat muddy imitation of it) for breakfast, Susy has fruit juice, eggs, bacon, toast, cake, and genuine coffee at home. Meals at home are large, varied, and delicious, catering, of course, to Susy's desires. My special Austrian "dishes," "gehrsten soup," "zwetchken knoedel," and "apfel kuchen," are served. The refrigerator is also loaded with snacks, so that if there should be any room left in my body, I can fill it with fruit, beverages, or sandwiches.

Although no cameraman asks me to sit on a suitcase, cross my legs, raise my skirt a little, and smile "pretty," I feel like Marlene Dietrich when I arrive at the train station. Sister Helen greets me with outstretched arms, shouts, "Susy!", and lipsticks my face with affectionate kisses. Niece Tiny offers me some "dum" (baby talk for gum) and proceeds to try to empty the contents of my suitcase on the station floor. Mom comes toward me with a bouquet of roses in her arms, and shoves them at me as I try to embrace her. Susy's home from college!

I can't see any connection between coming home from college and the giving of gifts, but apparently my family feels that the two are related. Besides the roses from Mom and the "dum" from Tiny, sister Helen treats me to my favorite chocolate-marshmallow sundae with sliced bananas, and

buys me a box of miniature chocolates; sister Betty presents me with an Angora sweater; and sister Irene bakes cookies for me. Then, too, Mom gives me food (bread, jelly, turkey, and cake) to take back to college. Pop, fearing that my finances are declining, offers a little aid. If my birth certificate didn't specifically state June 19, I'd swear that I had another birthday.

Gone are the days when Susy was chief dish-washer, furniture-duster, and bed-maker. Now that I am in college, my hands must not be reddened by hard water, or ruined by dirt. When I go home for the week-end, I sit and watch others work. During pre-college days, Susy helped Pop in his tailor shop by waiting on customers. Now, I bring delicacies to the tailors, and talk with them as they work. I am the visitor rather than the fellow-worker.

My friends treat me in a somewhat different manner when I go home for the week-end. When I meet them, I feel like a missionary who has just returned from the jungles of Africa, having faced wild animals, having suffered from hunger, and having existed without the necessary cosmetics for months and months. Their eyes start at the curls on the top of my head, and travel downward until they reach my toes; then they rise up to my face again. Their faces immediately screw up disappointedly, and they exclaim, "Hiya, Susy! Gee! You haven't changed a bit!" Is that an insult or a compliment? By their conversation, I imagine that they are wondering whether or not I now smoke, whether I have turned "highbrow," or whether I have acquired a southern accent. They evidently feel that a change in environment necessitates a change in character.

Some of my friends greet me with wide-eyed enthusiasm, and ask, "Have you snagged a man yet?" That, to them, is the purpose of going to college. Further questions reveal that they are curious about the number of men in college, the kind of men there, and anything else pertaining to men. After the male situation is quite clear in their minds, they inquire about my classes, living quarters, pleasures, and acquaintances. Since another of my hobbies is talking, I gladly answer all of their questions.

Thinking that college people are overworked and underfed, my friends plan entertainment for me when I go home for the week-end. They generally take me either to a bowling alley, or to a movie. During the course of the evening we eat, not light refreshments, but solid meals. Sometimes we take walks, and stop at all the old "hang-outs" for refreshments. There's the corner drugstore with the curly-haired drugstore cowboy; the Blue Room, which features my favorite chocolate-marshmallow sundae with sliced bananas; and the Karmel Korn shop, which has penny candy: double-bubble gum, red whips, bull's-eyes, and Mary Janes. After an evening's entertainment planned by my friends, Mom has the bottle of Pepto-Bismol (it says on

the bottle "to relieve indigestion due to over-indulgence in food") ready for me. She knows my friends.

Having heard the recent events of my life, my friends proceed to tell me about their lives. They inform me that Earl Patrick, the "ooh-la-la" editor of our church paper, is now in the army; that Mitzi Keil journeyed to Texas and married her lieutenant; that Lois Matthews, the town's most beautiful June bride, has a son. All the news of the past few months is related to me. I provide a perfect outlet for all the "inside dope." My friends evidently feel that I have been cut off from civilization for such a long time that I crave all the news.

Going home for the week-end is more than a pleasure to me; it is an inducement to work hard, and to endeavor diligently to gain the most benefits from my college education. The fact that my family and my friends place me on a pedestal challenges me to make myself worthy of a place on that pedestal. And Susy accepts that challenge—she won't let them down!

On Winning the War

FRED T. SIEGRIST

Rhetoric I, Theme 15, 1942-1943

IS THIS COUNTRY GOING TO WIN THE WAR? THE ANSWER to that question will affect every living citizen of these United States.

At first glance it would seem that we have the better team. The Allied Nations include most of the nations of the world. The more important ones are the United States, England and her Empire, Russia, China, the Netherlands, Free France, and most of South America. Against this formidable coalition, stand only Germany, Japan, and another little country. We can discount Italy completely when sizing up the active opposition against the Allies. The conquered countries, I am sure, are not cooperating wholeheartedly with the Axis.

When the facts are presented in this manner, they present a sorry picture for the Axis. Is the Axis really in sorry straits? No! It is a very misleading picture I have painted. It does not take into account many of the facts which must be considered in estimating the opposition. For instance: how do Germany's and Japan's supply problems compare with our own? How much longer has the Axis been preparing for war than have we? How many more battle-toughened troops and leaders has the Axis than have we?

Our supply problem, along with England's, is one of the worst in the history of warfare. To supply the troops fighting four or five thousand miles away is no easy job for the Army and Navy. The Axis nations, although

smaller than we, have built up a terrific war machine by starting early and by going about it in a thoroughly workmanlike manner. The job of catching-up with and out-producing the Axis will be one of the major battles fought in this war. Germany has another advantage in the fact that all her troops are battle-seasoned. Her generals have decided army policy while under fire, whereas our own generals have had to gain their experience in war games and by observation. However, we must not forget that Russian and British soldiers have been under fire.

Now, suppose the worst comes to the worst, and the United States of America collapses.

"What!" You say. "Why, that's impossible and unthinkable!"

But let us analyze the situation that faces America. Let us view with a pessimistic eye every possible catastrophe that could befall our country. There is no sense in ignoring these possibilities. We might as well admit that they can happen. If we understand them, we will be better prepared to fight back if affairs do turn against us.

The first outstanding misfortune that comes to mind is the collapsing of our national economy. Our national debt is mounting up and up and hovering over our heads in a most threatening attitude. Can this giant monster, which Congress is creating, be controlled? I am not qualified to say whether or not it can be. We have the words of our foremost economists and Congressmen, assuring us that no harm will come from this huge governmental debt. But these men are building their assumptions merely on economic theory. There has never been any such staggering debt in the history of our country or any other country. In other words, we are plunging into a vast economic jungle through which no trail has been blazed.

Another important problem is the farmer's plight. Is he going to be able to produce enough food in this country to feed our soldiers, the rest of the world, and also ourselves? In a short span of three years our productive ability has diminished. Of prime importance is the disappearance of skilled farm labor. In the early stages of the draft law, farm youths were drafted indiscriminately. Many other farm boys eagerly traded the drudgery and low pay of the farm for the big, easy money of the many defense plants which had sprung up throughout the country. It would be an easy matter to draft men to work in factories, but the plan to draft labor for farm work is proving unsuccessful because, whereas it takes only a couple of weeks to train someone to work in a factory, it takes a year to train someone to become a good farmhand.

All in all, these problems present a rather bleak picture to the average person, but since we must face the possibility of such catastrophes, let us stand squarely to the test and come out fighting. We all know we can win this war if we will cooperate wholeheartedly with each other, and not wait for the other fellow to do the job.

Plays of the Second World War

JAMES COLLINS

Rhetoric II, Theme 8, 1942-1943

I SUPPOSE IT CAN'T BE HELPED. I SUPPOSE THAT THESE plays were written with perfectly good intentions, for people with perfectly good intentions to see. If that is so, then the authors have accomplished their missions, for I have no doubt that many sad mothers, fathers, and sweethearts have shed tears after seeing or reading one of the Second World War plays, and have said to themselves, "That is what we are fighting for." Or, they have said, "That is why we will win." Or, from the earliest plays, they might have decided, "That is why we must get in the fight." In writing propaganda with good intentions for people with good intentions, the war-play authors have succeeded.

First, they failed because their receptive audience is limited to mothers, fathers, and sweethearts. The plays are all dependent upon strong emotionalism, both in the lines and in the audience—so what must be the reaction of the disillusioned cynic, or the young generation of nihilists? The well-intentioned people are undoubtedly very happy and proud as they hear Steinbeck's mayor, in *The Moon Is Down*, quote, to a German general, Socrates' denunciation:

" 'I prophesy to you who are my murderers,
That immediately after my departure,
Punishment far heavier than you have inflicted on me
Will surely await you . . . '

(His voice grows stronger.)

'For I say that there will be more accusers of you than there are now.

Accusers whom hitherto I have restrained.

If you think that by killing men, you can prevent someone from censoring your lives—you are mistaken.' "

It is inspiring for the mothers and fathers to see this old man go to his death while foretelling the inevitable doom of the hated enemy, inspiring to hear Mrs. Valkonen¹ read the letter her husband had written just before his death:

" ' . . . Now the death of our son is only a fragment in the death of our country. But Erik and the others who give their lives are also giving to mankind a symbol—a little symbol, to be sure, but a clear one—of man's unconquerable aspiration to dignity and freedom and purity in the sight of God.' "

¹Sherwood, Robert E., *There Shall Be No Night* (New York, 1940), p. 176.

That, rightfully, brings the tears of the mothers and fathers, while the sweethearts are probably more impressed with the linking of the lovers' souls in *Candle in the Wind*. Their tears probably come quicker when the lovers in every one of the plays decide that the cause must come first. They are impressed when, in the majority of the plays, one of the sweethearts must and does carry on alone after the death of his or her mate. Mothers, fathers, and sweethearts cry and feel proud and happy because of these war plays. But the disillusioned cynic has been unimpressed by emotionalism even more skillfully handled. And the young nihilist doubts the hero's courage, and wonders if the cause must come first.

Second, the plays have failed in furthering the art of drama because the moral or idea behind each play is either vague or weak. In the first of the war plays, *Fifth Column*, by Hemingway, the hero carries on his loathed job of counter-espionage in Spain, without knowing why he stays on the job. He is too much of a cynic to believe in any ultimate goal or victory, but he carries on because he "must." In *The Eve of Saint Mark*, a group of American soldiers choose death instead of a safe retreat, because something in them tells them "they must." Granted that these characters were not supposed to be sure of themselves, but the authors did not seem able to tell why "they must," or what made the fact that "they must" noble and fine. The authors could only hint that they thought the fact that their characters "must" was noble and fine; they didn't say why. To my mind, vagueness does not make good drama; it makes confusion. The main ideas behind the other plays seem weak, because they are a product of wishful thinking, and not of reason:

MADELINE—"We expect you. In the history of the world there have been many wars between men and beasts. And the beasts have always lost, and men have won."² [It can't have been too permanent a victory.]

KURT—" . . . But you will live to see the day when it will not have to be. All over the world, in every place and every town, there are men who are going to make sure it will not have to be."³

And so we find this hero fighting for a new world sans war, sans hatred. Beautiful thought, but hardly acceptable by those of us who were brought up on the fallacies of World War One, and who were taught to believe that the war to end wars has already been fought. These little speeches that unfurled the flags and crowded enlistment centers in the last war are hardly suitable now. Today's people are confused enough to understand the confusion of the hero in *The Fifth Column*, or the heroes in *The Eve of Saint Mark*, but if the audience are to decide from a play what it is they are working and fighting for, there must be more than mutual confusion between the

²Anderson, Maxwell, *Candle in the Wind* (Washington, 1941), p. 211.

³Hellman, Lillian, "Watch on the Rhine," *The Best Plays of 1940-41*, ed. Burns Mantle (New York, 1941), p. 91.

characters and the audience. The ideas must be more convincing than those which all of us have heretofore been taught are useless. The plays must have something more concrete than men dying because "they must."

Third, the plots, and the characters involved in the plots, are older than the *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, or *Ten Nights in a Barroom* plays. *The Fifth Column* (one of the weakest of the war plays) is an exception. This is because the author seems to decide, halfway through the play, that the war theme is not so important as the love theme. Therefore, in place of the standard villain, the hero turns his own sadist, and the play centers upon illicit sex à la Hemingway short stories. However, in the other plays, villains are continually whipping, and victims are continually clenching their teeth and muttering, "There'll come a day." Most of the time the victims live to see the day; occasionally they die. But they know their children, allies, or humanity will see the day. In *Candle in the Wind*, a German colonel continually upsets the heroine's plans to free her lover from prison. All the evils of the Nazi government are in his character, and all the virtues of courage, honor, and love (the United Nations), are in hers. Naturally she wins. In *Watch on the Rhine*, a blackmailer threatens the allies' cause and the hero's life. Through a series of ultra-dramatic sequences the cheat is killed, and the hero is able to return from the United States to Germany, and probable, but honorable, death. As consistent a character as the villain is the caught-in-the-hands-of-fate lover. In *Letters to Lucerne*, a young German crashes his plane and dies, purposely, so that he won't kill his sweetheart's people or let down his own. In *There Shall Be No Night*, the inevitable two young ones verbally rebel against a world that has demanded so much of them; but the hero goes to an honorable death for his country. In *Watch on the Rhine*, the married couple think they have found a haven in the United States, but duty calls the husband away from his family, and he returns to his diseased fatherland to fight for the human race. Another character, who appears in three of the plays, is the doubting Nazi, the man who recognizes the truth and beauty of the world he is fighting against, and who hates his position. The colonel in *The Moon Is Down* feels that his government will be defeated. The lover in *Letters to Lucerne* commits suicide so that he won't have to fight for something he doesn't believe in. A captain in *Candle in the Wind* helps a prisoner escape, and goes to the other side after he has "seen the light." There is nothing new about these characters. Certainly the right-will-win-in-the-end plot is not new. In dressing up old melodrama for propaganda purposes, the authors may have satisfied a few sentimentalists, but they have disgusted most of the theatre critics, and made people like myself (pessimists because of the last war) begin thinking thoughts unhealthy for wartime.

There Shall Be No Night and *Watch on the Rhine* have enjoyed most of the small success which the Second World War plays have had. The

very fact that two of the plays *were* fairly successful proves that it was not the war theme which defeated the others. People are willing to think and talk about the war; they want to. If a playwright can give them new ideas, or even shape their own satisfactorily, I am sure that his play would be well received. But mothers, fathers, and sweethearts do not make a sufficient audience, even if they are a receptive one. They are the ones that *must* cling to the hopes and philosophies of these plays. And they are not enough.

But if the others of us must have something new, and the government propaganda department can't give it to us, and we can't give it to ourselves, I suppose we can't ask the playwrights for the answers. I suppose it is better to have the mothers, fathers, and sweethearts comforted than no one at all. I suppose that the plays can't be much better until after the war—after we decide what we fought for. I suppose it can't be helped.

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Happiness

I have only one *standard* for which I strive—happiness. Many people, at first, may think this a rather narrow and selfish goal. However, if one really stops to think about it, he will realize that happiness is an all-inclusive word. It is that intangible thing which makes life worth living. It is the pride a mother feels when her son wins his first high-school honor. It is the satisfaction a doctor feels when he has performed a life-saving operation. It is the sense of well-being a naturalist feels as he tramps through the green, dewy woods and marvels at nature's wonderland. It is the contentment a family feels seated around a blazing fire with the wind howling and roaring outside in the cold. It is the spirit of success and enthusiasm an athlete feels after he has won a championship game.

—BEN FISHER

The Rubber Shortage Problem

GERALD L. HARMANSON

Rhetoric II, Theme 15, 1942-1943

BECAUSE OF THE SHORTAGE OF RUBBER BROUGHT ON by the war, drivers of automobiles have been forced to limit their activities. Those who formerly spent the greater part of their leisure time at the wheel find the curtailment a persistent annoyance, and, consequently, they gobble down with eager impatience any story of the production of synthetic rubber.

The rumor ran around that someone had discovered a process whereby rubber could be made from sugar. Thousands of people filled the streets with their lusty shouts of joy and anticipation, and fifty-six reportedly ran amuck, puncturing every tire they came upon and shouting, "So what!" This was indeed a gala occasion until some practical-minded soul, a kill-joy, no doubt, casually pointed out that sugar is as much in demand as rubber. Frustration and consternation reigned, and the fifty-six are enjoying a violent, yet hampered, existence at the expense of the State.

Manufacturers of grain alcohol, and certain Congressmen from the prairie states, are agitating for the use of alcohol instead of petroleum in manufacturing artificial rubber, declaring alcohol to be both cheaper and faster. Without knowing anything about the petroleum process, I want to endorse the alcohol side of the fight with every fiber of my being. I feel absolutely certain that you can make rubber from alcohol, and make it easily and economically. Anyone who went through the prohibition era with my uncle will agree with me.

There was alcohol in those glorious days that tasted like, or of, rubber—this was, in fact, one of the more common flavors. Some of the murkier fluid may actually have been rubber in the making. If eager hands hadn't seized it and mixed it with grapefruit juice, the secret of synthetic rubber might have been discovered then and there.

What my uncle recalls, with a racking shudder, was the alcohol made by amateurs. Eventually, the amateurs improved, and began turning out a high-grade product that tasted more like turpentine. It was in the earliest days that the rubber, or roofing, taste was strongest. Then is when the secret of synthetic rubber was begging to be discovered, and I have no doubt that some batches went the whole route, turning to rubber before they could be sold. If a few of these pioneer alcohol cookers could be rolled in the dirt again, they could repeat their performance.

The alcohol-to-rubber formula escaped discovery at that time for the obvious reason that no one was interested. A process to make alcohol from

tires would have received acclaim. Even if small pellets of rubber had formed in the glass, no heed would have been paid. You were regarded as a hypochondriac if you objected to anything smaller than a mouse. Those were no times to be fastidious. While the rubber flavor was occasionally clear, it was by no means the most popular. Shoe polish, cucumber, old carpeting, and ether were flavors equally common, with ether perhaps the prevailing favorite.

Any number of factors determined whether your tongue merely received an unusual sensation, or whether your digestive system caught the equivalent of ten thousand volts.

My uncle ascribes the rubber taste in the drink to the fact that the cowards who made the stuff were afraid to handle the potent commodity without rubber gloves. My uncle may be right (if anyone would know, he would), but the hint of potentialities is there, nevertheless.

The phrase "If I knew then what I know now" is of such sterling virtue that it should be chanted by a boys' choir in white tunics from the summit of a holy hill at twilight. I heartily recommend that steps be taken to retrieve those distillers previously mentioned, and offer them jobs. Since America's driving pleasure is at stake, none of these artists should be hired if their standards have slipped and they have become tramps or school teachers.

I Become a Defense Worker

ROGER RUBIN

Rhetoric II, Theme 11, 1942-1943

I FOLLOWED MY FOREMAN DOWN THE AISLE, ABOUT three paces behind. He walked fast for a short man, scooting his legs out in front of him in a frantic, frustrated manner. The roaring of the pipe machines on my left overawed me. On my right were enormous piles of loaded sacks; they looked as if they'd been there for years.

"What's those?" I asked, catching up.

"Scrap dust," he answered.

"Oh," I said, blankly.

They'd told me I was hired to pile pipes out in the yard. At present I was headed anywhere but toward the yard. We turned a corner, and I was confronted by some boiler-like monstrosities which barred our path completely.

"Now you'll move these," he said.

I snapped around incredulously. Oh, he was talking about a pile of empty sacks. He issued a string of further orders in a rapid barrage of

unintelligible staccato grunts, and walked away. "Slovakian," I thought. There was a pushcart nearby, and I dragged it over. I scooped up as many of the sacks as I could hold. I was immediately suffocated by an intense cloud of dust, and, dropping the bags, I staggered away, coughing spasmodically. I gazed about, distressed and embarrassed. There were only a few men in sight; they were wandering leisurely among the maze of machines.

After that I worked slowly and scientifically till the sacks were piled high and evenly on the cart. Then I put my weight against it. It didn't budge. Just then my foreman reappeared, and, with a look of disgust, tore half my pile down and started to push the cart down the aisle. I lent my shoulder, and after a few minutes of puffing and straining, we arrived at a mountain of bags similar to ours—only these were full, and some were torn and rotted, exposing a black, fibrous substance, which two men were digging out and shoveling into dry bags. Tony, the foreman, muttered some more and left. One of the men handed me a shovel and sat down on the bags. The other man sat down too. I filled a bag and gathered the top in my hand.

"What now?" I inquired.

One of the men laughed. "I dunno. We ain't never got that far before."

Then they both laughed.

I thought, "Well, Hell," and sat down too. We chatted for a while, and I learned that Transite pipe was made from a number of different fibers from different parts of the world, and that this pile had been soaked when someone left the big doors open during a rain, and that Dominic was the only guy to look out for, and he was a bastard, and for God's sake don't let them put you on the pipe machines.

Finally we did a little work, and at ten o'clock Tony came over to lead me to a row of lathes. "You'll work with Antioch here," he informed me. Antioch was about twenty-five, five feet six, and built like an ape.

"First we'll move these pipes from over here to over here," Antioch said, motioning his arm in an indefinite arc. There were six pipes, each about thirteen feet long and nine or ten inches in diameter, resting on a steel tray about a foot high. He put his back toward one end, and I went to the other. "Two," he said. I gripped the top edge of each pipe. The edges were rather sharp. I jerked upward with all my strength. I was nearly thrown flat on my face. One of the pipes rolled a little to the right. Antioch turned around and gave me a look. I finally managed to lift the pipes a few inches. My knees were vibrating like a couple of tuning forks. I staggered across the tray, straining with more physical and mental force than I'd ever dreamed I was capable of. I managed to keep my back straight, but my shoulders felt as if they were being pulled out like corks. After I'd covered about thirty yards of this gruesome pilgrimage, I let my pipes clatter to the floor. The men on the lathes turned around and snickered, and

Antioch cursed me roundly. Since we had almost reached our goal, I managed to get them there. "Two more trips like that and I'm done!" I thought. The other two trips *were* like that, and I *was* done!

Finally, the noon whistle blew. Feeling very guilty, I fetched my lunch box from where I had left it near the washroom. I was afraid my foreman would accost me and ask me where I had been all morning. There was a row of men seated on some boxes nearby, and I saw Antioch among them. I self-consciously approached the group and sat down beside him. He looked up at me with an expression of suppressed amusement and outspoken pity. As if by way of greeting, or maybe judgment, he squirted a healthy glob of tobacco juice on to the floor at my feet. He mumbled, "Hi," and bit into a sandwich at least four inches thick. It contained ham, cheese, tomato, and lettuce. The tomato dripped out all over his pants. I opened my lunch box and found five petite sandwiches individually wrapped in wax paper. I also discovered half a fried chicken, two squashed plums, six chocolate cookies, and a thermos full of invigorating-looking coffee, which proved to be at least five degrees warmer than room temperature.

A young, husky kid got up and pranced back and forth, throwing plums twenty feet into the air and catching them in his mouth. The man on the ceiling crane above our heads threw an orange peeling down at someone and received a barrage of food and paper scraps. I had finished a sandwich and a half when the whistle blew. Back to work? I looked at my watch. Well, so we got fifteen minutes for lunch! I looked around for some obscure corner where I could sit down and let my food digest properly. I began idly to read the bulletin-board. There were signs about increasing production and avoiding accidents and keeping mum about defense secrets. There was the honor roll of workers in the services.

I wandered out into the blazing sunlight of the yard. Three men were standing by a big truck.

"C'mere, you!" one called. "A little help here!" I went over and started to help one man lift pipes up to the other two in the back of the truck. They started talking about the speed with which the pipes were going out to equip army camps and how the war was going and how they'd like to get a crack at those Japs. We were loading the pipes with increasing rapidity; the two of us were standing in a puddle left from last night's rain, and synchronized ripples appeared as we shifted our weights from one foot to the other. I could suddenly feel my patriotic muscles rippling superbly under my shirt. The axis was doomed already, smothered under a wave of American production, irresistible. . . .

My foot slipped, and I found myself sprawled face forward in the muddy water. I lifted myself slowly. "Yes," I thought. "There'll be great hardships, but we'll be equal to them!" I spat out a little mud and knocked some of the slime off my clothes.

Dance Job

JAMES E. RINGGER

Rhetoric II, Theme 15, 1942-1943

FROM A CORNER OF THE GRIMY LITTLE DANCE HALL come the first shrill shrieks of a cornet; a pudgy little man in a faded "tux" lets out a few desultory wails from his trombone. Saxes ripple up and down arpeggios, while the pianist, a young, dreamy-looking high school kid, chords out some weird arrangement of his. Through the door walk the drummer and bass player, arm in arm, singing merrily. They unpack their instruments, then go over by the piano and begin "jamming." Soon they are racing gaily along on one of Will Hudson's rhythm-section "hot" numbers. The bassist takes a solo on the "break" strain, thumping and slapping vigorously as he twirls his bass back and forth. The kid at the piano, hands flying lightly across the keyboard, glances around, grins widely, and nods his head. One by one the other musicians gather around and join in the "jam session."

Several young boys, attracted by the irresistible noise, collect about the piano, wide-eyed and grinning. They snicker among themselves as they imitate the musicians. Soon they tire of listening and wander over to the equipment, piled in disorderly heaps in a corner. They finger everything and hold a whispered consultation on every discovery. Into the room strides a loudly dressed young fellow: "O.K., fellas, let's get set up; dance starts in five minutes. Hey, you kids, scram!"

Huge clouds of smoke swirl and eddy about the dingy, grey room, and the smells of warm beer and garlic permeate everything. Feeble lights from over the music stands can scarcely cut through the haze of cigarette smoke. An occasional red booth-light winks out of the gloom as dancers swing by.

The dance hall is packed, and the band is swinging a fast, "hot" tune. Dancers spin, glide, stomp, tramp about the little hall. Dresses swirl up about wildly gyrating legs; coats and jackets fly out carelessly in all directions. Perspiration beads the faces and arms of the dancers, and their clothes cling possessively.

The drum throbs, throbs, throbs; cornets shrill madly. The musicians, drenched in sweat (and now in shirt-sleeves), thump and stamp their feet heavily, and nod their heads in cadence to the pulsating music. They give themselves fully, freely to the music; a strange, fierce smile is on their faces. They are completely absorbed in their music. Dancers glide out of some gloomy corner, then melt away again into the all-pervading greyness.

Something eerie, wild, foreboding seems to enter the rhythm, as the music sweeps triumphantly into the last, fastest chorus. Suddenly one seems

to see a campfire, hear tom-toms, in a primeval setting. Glistening, half-naked savages dart in and out of the shadows around the fire, screaming and yelling madly in the climactic orgies of some weird dance. One seems to feel himself slipping from reality. The leaden, monotonous thud of the drum pervades everything.

Then, with a last defiant crash, the music ceases, and cruel lights flash on. Amid splatters of applause and titters of conversation, the dancers drift languorously back to their booths or to the bar. Bodies slide wearily into soft seats; voices call gaily for drinks. Perspiring musicians gratefully gulp down great, cool draughts of beer. It is intermission.

Rhet as Writ

Why did she want to gamble all her chances of ever becoming a great star again by actions that is unbecoming and that would leave a bad taste in the eyes of the public.

. . . .

The Socratic method is the method whereby the answer is obtained by means of the inquisitor asking the answerer questions, the answers to which usually answer the original question asked.

. . . .

The introduction of the gas driven motor put the finishing touches on the end of the horse.

. . . .

It is not surprising to see the banker's wife riding down the street on a bicycle or even the banker himself.

. . . .

It (the "Beverage" plan) includes caring for the old, expectant mothers and babies.

. . . .

Europe, a small continent when compared to most of the other six continents but large with trouble, is the core of the apple. The apple cart is very easily upset. Peace has come to parts of Europe. Peace has come and has gone like the "Good Humour Man." How can we start to have peace, if the "Good Humor Man" doesn't stop long enough to sell any ice cream? We can start to have peace by holding up a five cent piece and calling, "Hey, You with the pants on, one Skyrocket!"

Honorable Mention

Jewens Craig: *The Job Ahead*

Donald Duvick: *Gullies*

James Gingrich: *Americans! Think!*

Leon Gottfried: *On Utopian Dreams*

Rosaline Grebetz: *Shorty*

Merton J. Kahne: *Long-Shot*

Dorothy Kelahan: *The War and I*

Jean Lovendahl: *Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever*

David Offner: *On Your Mark!*

Jo Ann Perring: *Alma Mater*

Lucille Teninga: *Let's Take a Walk*

William D. Warren: *Defender of the Indefensible*

Jane Williams: *Claustrophobia*

Neal Woodruff: *Jazz Today*

